



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/595,136	06/16/2000	Karl-Heinz Ellenberger	Mlr206	2734

7590 07/25/2002  
Horst M Kasper  
13 Forest Drive  
Warren, NJ 07059

EXAMINER

RODRIGUEZ, JOSEPH C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3653

DATE MAILED: 07/25/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/595,136

Applicant(s)

ELLENBERGER ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph C Rodriguez

Art Unit

3653

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-8 and 10-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2, 4-8, 11, 17, 23, 25, 26 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3, 10, 12-16, 18-22, 24, 27 and 28 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 June 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Specification***

***Claim Objections***

Claims 2-8 and 10-16 are objected as the form of claims is improper. Where a claim sets forth a plurality of elements or steps, as in the instant claims, each element or step should be separated by a line indentation. See MPEP 608.01(m) and 37 CFR 1.75(i).

Further, in claim 23, indent (G), the language "relative" is misspelled.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 2, 8, 11, 17, 23 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rosenfeld (US '365).

Rosenfeld teaches a method and apparatus (Fig. 1-3) for sorting laundry comprising a feed device with a funnel (20), a transport device (50, 52) with a transport band (152) which receives laundry pieces separated by a predetermined distance, a recognition device (32, 34), a registering device (col. 6, ln. 1-16), a processor (42), collection containers (60, 64, 66, 68, 70), and a collection device (42, 50). Hereinbelow, the funnel (20) is regarded as receiving the laundry pieces "on" the transport device as

the pieces, when traveling from the top to the bottom of the funnel, are deposited on the picker mechanism. Further, the feed device is regarded as "dispensing" the laundry pieces as it presents the pieces to the transport device for further processing.

Regarding claim 17, the collection devices are the containers taught above and the control means is inherent in the control circuit (42).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-7 and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosenfeld in view of Weiss et al. ("Weiss") (US '435).

Rosenfeld as set forth above teaches all that is claimed except for expressly teaching a registering device either pre-disposed or post-disposed in relation to a collection device. Weiss, however, explicitly teaches the use of predisposed sensors (i.e., photodetectors/register devices) for each receiving/collecting station (Abstract; col. 14, ln. 48 et seq.). Moreover, the use of sensors for each collecting station allows the sorter to better coordinate the release of each article into a collection station as well as assuring that an article is present (Id.). Further, the positioning (i.e., post-disposed) of the sensor can be regarded as a mere design parameter well known to one with skill in the laundry sorter arts. Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time the invention

was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Rosenfeld as taught above.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 3, 10, 12-16 and 18-22, 24 and 27-28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Conclusion***

Any references not explicitly discussed above but made of record are considered relevant to the prosecution of the instant application.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph C Rodriguez whose telephone number is 703-308-8342. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F during business hours, with alternate Mondays off.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-306-4195.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

\*\*\*

July 22, 2002

  
DONALD P. WALSH  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600